1948

How's Your Football I. Q.?

John Wood
Iowa State College

Follow this and additional works at: http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/homemaker

Part of the Home Economics Commons

Recommended Citation
Available at: http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/homemaker/vol28/iss4/2

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Publications at Iowa State University Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Iowa Homemaker by an authorized editor of Iowa State University Digital Repository. For more information, please contact digirep@iastate.edu.
How's Your Football I. Q.?

by John Wood

It's Saturday afternoon at Clyde Williams Field and thousands of lusty-lunged Cyclone football fans are tearing up the stadium. With only seconds to go, a Cardinal and Gold pass receiver outpaces the defense, picks a perfect spiral out of the air and races across the goal with the game-winning touchdown.

It's the perfect play, the kind fans always have, and probably always will, sit on the edges of their seats for.

But most touchdowns, unfortunately, don't come that easily in this age of scientific football. So the average fan must acquire a little more know-how to fully appreciate the great fall sport. And, surprisingly enough, a five-yard gain can be just as thrilling as a ninety-yard gain to the fan versed on a few of the finer points of football, 1948 style.

Of course, there is the danger of coeds becoming such rabid fans than in later years they will blow the grocery money trying to pick a three-way winner. But we'll risk junior's future Pabulum budget and present a few clues on how to add thrills to your next football game.

Any team's offense will fall flatter than an angel-food cake in an earthquake without lots of practice. A perfect play doesn't just come about. It's the result of many hours of drill, each player repeating his special assignment until he gets as near to perfection as his abilities allow. Considering the fact that Abe Stuber's Cyclones must know about 60 to 100 plays, and each player has a different assignment for each one, it isn't hard to realize why brains are an important ingredient in the touchdown recipe.

The next time you see Webb Halbert or Bob Angle making an end-run, cast a glance at the blockers. Do they do a good job clearing a path for the halfbacks? One block may mean the difference between a loss in yardage or a long gain. Watch the blockers for an extra thrill. A good clean block is a sight to watch.

Ten good blockers and a ball carrier add up to a winning football team.

It's much easier to see the blocking on an end run than on a line smash. What appears to be a milling pile of flailing arms and legs is a line of seven blockers. Each attempts to carry out his assignment in making a hole for Lornie Paulson, Bill Chauncey or Ray Klootwyck to charge through. It takes a good eye to pick out individual blocking in the line but once the feat is accomplished, your appreciation of the game multiplies and credit for a gain is given to the runners and blockers alike.

Just for fun, pick out a different lineman on several plays of the next game. When you are good at criticizing individual blocking, you have the groundwork for observing team blocking. If you miss seeing the runner make a long gain, your effort wasn't wasted.

When the enemy has the ball, the Cyclones throw
their tactics in reverse. They try to keep from being blocked and nail the ball carrier before any damage is done. It's a 1948 version of the knights of old that make up a good share of the thrills in football, with duels between opposing linemen, blocker and tackler, for the favor of the fair coed.

Line assignments are just as important on the defense as on the offense. If it's an end-run to be stopped, one of the Deans of the flanks, Laun or Norman, must break up the interference coming around with the ball carrier. If he can make the tackle, so much the better, but taking out the interference is his big job and one of the hardest in football. Watch for it.

Each lineman has an assigned position on defense. If he is taken out of the territory he is to protect, mark up a gain for the enemy. Sometimes the enemy will let a tackle rush through without any opposition. Then, when the tackle is congratulating himself for charging so nicely—Wham! He is hit by a truck (he swears) and his assigned territory is open. You probably recognize that bit of football finesse as the “mousetrap.” A smart lineman won't be caught in it. If he is, substitutions may beat a path to his door.

Iowa Teachers

In the first game of this season, you saw Iowa Teachers work a sort of mass mousetrap against the Cyclones. The entire Iowa State line was allowed to rush a Tutor back without opposition. Just before they hit him, the Tutor back passed the ball to a team mate near the line of scrimmage. Some fans are now watching Paulson but we know better. Ferguson tosses a lateral pass out to Angle who runs around end for a good gain.

Let's take a typical play. At the signal, Don Ferguson, leaning over center Rod Rust's back, takes the ball from Rust. He turns and pretends to give the ball to Paulson who makes like a freight train at the center of the line. Some fans are now watching Paulson but we know better. Ferguson tosses a lateral pass out to Angle who runs around end for a good gain.

Now, the same set up. Ferguson gets the ball from Rust, turns and pretends to give it to Paulson. Then he laterals it out to . . . . wait a minute . . . he did give it to Paulson this time and he made a first down through the middle. We were fooled, but we saw why a quarterback is the most important man on the team, offensively.

Clocklike Workings

Quarterbacks call plays in series like the two examples above. The first to get the defense in a position for the second to click. But just when you think you've got a series figured out, and the Cyclones' opponents think they do too, Stuber sends in John Griffith or Jim Sutherland with a play that is designed to fool everybody.

To fully appreciate the clocklike workings of the backfield, you have to realize that the players have been practicing their duties for months before the game and years before that. Even a natural halfback must run through each play routine hundreds of times before he is ready to do his best in a game. A half-second or half-step out of kilter could easily throw the whole works out of order. Only the expert can tell what's wrong when a play misses by a fraction of a second, but when a play clicks perfectly, it's a thrill to see and you know it doesn't just happen. It's the result of practice and more practice.

After the next game, whether the Cyclones win or lose, you too may claim it as one of the most thrilling you've seen. Your appreciation for the finer points and plays of football has increased, and your date is proud of you.